



## Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

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**Ted Strickland, Governor**

**John L. Martin, Director**

**To:** CBMR/DD Superintendents  
COG Directors  
SSA Directors  
DC Superintendents  
Providers

**From:** Kelly Miller, Assistant Deputy Director  
Office of Provider Standards and Review  
Division of Community Services

**Date:** December 11, 2008

**Re:** Reissue of Information Notice 03-03-04

I would like to draw your attention to the attached reissued Information Notice titled 03-03-04 pertaining to the oversight and documentation of Individual Funds. This notice has been updated to provide guidance to the field on the use and monitoring of gift cards for those we serve. The use of gift cards for personal use and as gifts is becoming more popular but can also be an area of financial vulnerability for those we serve. Gift cards, which are redeemable for goods and/or services and carry a value equivalent to cash, can be easily misused if appropriate tracking mechanisms are not in place. Since gift cards do not typically identify the individual they are intended for, these cards can be used by anyone in possession of the card, or obtaining and using the card number. Recommended strategies for ensuring appropriate use of gift cards can include but is not limited to:

1. *Keep gift cards and the activation receipts from the purchase of the cards in a secure location as you would cash.*
2. *Treat gift card balances as cash and log usage on a financial transaction record. If the individual you are supporting is giving a gift card, make a notation of the amount of gift card, the name of recipient and the date it was given.*
3. *Make a record of gift card purchases including the gift card number and maintain a receipt of the purchase(s) made with the gift card. Many retailers can track where and when gift cards are used. If stolen, you can contact the company and in some cases, the retailer will replace the card if you have the receipt.*
4. *If possible, register the gift card on the company's website as a way to protect the gift card in case of theft or loss.*
5. *When assisting with a purchase of a gift card, examine the package (especially those sold on publicly displayed racks). If the card's PIN number is visible, put the card back and choose a different one. PIN numbers can be copied from gift cards and thieves can periodically check to see if the card has been purchased/activated and use the PIN number online to make purchases.*

The Office of Provider Standards and Review will monitor records to ensure adequate oversight and documentation of individual's funds are met. If you have any questions, please contact me at 614-728-2520 or Greg Mason, Office of Audits at 614-728-0125. Thank you.

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